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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MX](#)  
SUBJECT: WAITING FOR THE WHOLE ENCHILADA: MEXICO REACTION  
TO PRESIDENT BUSH'S IMMIGRATION SPEECH FOCUSED ON  
"MILITARIZATION" AND FOX FAILURES

#### Summary

11. (SBU) Fox administration officials responded immediately to President Bush's 5/15 speech by stressing there was no "militarization" of the border, the shared responsibility for border security, and their concern over the lack of legislative progress on migration. Mexican commentators focused primarily on the perceived "militarization" of the border area and President Fox's failure to negotiate a comprehensive migration accord. Analysts noted the characterization of migrants as "illegal," questioned whether the National Guard deployments would be temporary, and equated National Guard with military forces. Most highlighted that President Bush's decisions marked a double failure for the Fox Administration -- it had failed to reach a migration accord with the U.S. and it had failed to maintain security along the border. While most reasoned voices did note that migration reform was linked to border control, they struggled against the prevalent desire to score political points against Fox on this issue. End Summary.

#### Setting the Stage

12. (SBU) A series of U.S.-Mexico consultations 5/12-5/13 culminated in a conversation between the two presidents which allowed President Fox to tell media he had expressed Mexican concerns to President Bush about militarization of the border, and had been assured that this was not the intent. The Ambassador followed with a press statement early 5/15 urging Mexicans to watch the speech for themselves, stressing the support role the National Guard might be called upon to play, and reiterating the strong cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico. The statement noted that migration reform was contingent upon a sense among Americans that the border was controlled and American laws were being respected. PAS and POL followed up with outreach -- which continues -- to key commentators, political leaders and the presidential campaigns. We are encouraging contacts to understand that border security enhancements directly impact the legislative process, pointing out that the Fox Administration is savvy enough to position itself now to benefit from eventual passage of immigration reform.

#### Official Reactions

13. (U) After the speech Fox administration officials sought -- mostly successfully -- to hew to a common line. An SRE communique issued 5/15 expressed appreciation for the President's recognition of the role migrants play in the U.S. economy and his commitment to comprehensive migration reform. It stressed that the GOM has been assured the U.S. measures do not constitute militarization of the border. The GOM remained concerned that these measures were being taken absent corresponding progress in the legislative process. Finally, the GOM would redouble its efforts to protect the

rights of Mexicans living in the U.S. Presidential spokesperson Ruben Aguilar recapped many of these points, noted the GOM's concern over President Bush's decision to send six thousand National Guard soldiers to the border but acknowledged that it was a sovereign decision. Aguilar reiterated that the Fox administration has expressed its position on numerous occasions, including Fox's 5/14 telephone conversation with President Bush, that the migration problem can only be resolved through cooperation and not from a strictly law enforcement or judicial perspective. Foreign Secretary Luis Derbez and Undersecretary for North American Affairs Geronimo Gutierrez both repeatedly stated that the GOM had received assurances that the deployment did not constitute a militarization of the border and that the real concern is that this deployment is not accompanied by sufficient advances on immigration reform in the United States Congress.

#### Congress Circles the Wagons

¶4. (U) A handful of senators and federal deputies from the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and the Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD) used the speech as an opportunity to criticize the Fox administration. Senators Humberto Roque (PRI) and Raymundo Cardenas (PRD) (both running for election as federal deputies in 2006) chastised Fox for "accepting the militarization of the border instead of the promise of migration reform." Two federal deputies from the same parties condemned the decision to bring in the National Guard and affirmed that the U.S. initiative represents the failure of Fox's migration policies and the end of any hopes for a bilateral migration accord. Not all the reaction was negative, however, as National Action (PAN) Deputy Ivan Cortes stated his lone opinion that the deployment of National Guard forces to the border can be a positive move to

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break the impasse on migration reform in the U.S. Congress.

#### Candidates Speak

¶5. (U) PAN presidential candidate Felipe Calderon was the first to react to President Bush's statements, commenting that the strategy to deploy troops was erroneous, that walls are not the solution, and that migrants are not a threat. His campaign followed up his initial statements with a more detailed reaction: expressing Calderon's understanding that President Bush will continue to seek a comprehensive reform while increasing security to appeal to those who believe more wall, sensors, and border patrol agents are necessary; that those same groups misunderstand the situation, raising the social and human costs to migrants while benefiting the criminals who take advantage of them; calling for a solution based on cooperation and mutual responsibility; and reiterating that walls are not a solution. Calderon also added that as president he will make employment in Mexico a top priority and that his government will assume the responsibility to actively defend and promote the rights of migrants in the U.S. indiscriminate of their migratory status.

¶6. (U) Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO), the PRD's presidential candidate, stated that the National Guard deployment, "is not the solution, it is not the alternative, but it is a shame for us," blaming the Fox administration for a lack of employment that forces people to emigrate. AMLO suggested that the U.S. decision will only generate more friction, more violations of human rights, and mistreatment of migrants. He called on the GOM to protest the decision and explained that such deployments would not happen under his presidency because he would make credible commitments on job creation that would convince the U.S. to adopt different measures.

¶7. (U) PRI presidential candidate Roberto Madrazo had the least to say about the issue, commenting simply that the militarization of the northern border was major evidence of

Fox's foreign policy failures.

Hot Off the Press

18. (U) Much like the candidates and politicians, the Mexican media, analysts, and opinion-makers focused on plans to deploy National Guard troops on the border. They dwelled over the characterization of migrants as "illegal," and the apparent grouping of "undocumented" migrants with narcotraffickers and terrorists. The media and analysts were also skeptical of reports that the Guard will assume "logistical and administrative duties," and that their deployment is strictly temporary. They have been critical of the Fox administration as well, complaining about its failure to confront the U.S. over the deployment and its inability to control crime along the border. An editorial published in Mexico City's leading daily, El Universal, blasted the GOM by equating the President's speech with a "complete breakdown of Mexico's migratory policy." The analysis generally epitomized the Mexican fixation on migration entitlement combined with the political spin of campaign season. A handful of commentators -- many reached by the Ambassador or PAS staff Monday -- acknowledged that border control was linked in the U.S. to migration reform, and that Mexico must take the sweet with the sour. Quoting the Ambassador, Televisa's Adela Micha noted that "the United States is beefing up its efforts to make the border more secure," and that "President Bush is responsible for guaranteeing the security of the American people." Commentator Joaquin Lopez-Dorriga cited Ambassador Garza's concern about the "millions of people who live and work illegally in the U.S.," and his opinion that, "Congress will not seriously consider any legislation addressing their presence unless we can make our borders more secure."

Comment

19. (SBU) Post appreciates the effort by Washington agencies to brief key GOM officials on the points in the speech, an effort which allowed the Fox Administration to develop a consistent and constructive position. Post efforts to explain the complicated linkage between security and migration, begun almost a year ago and intensified on Monday, clearly paid off with some commentators. We will continue to reach out to media and the political campaigns. But in a vicious and close-run electoral season it is too much to expect that the presidential contenders won't try to create an opportunity to criticize Fox's policies, and thus trim the sails of front-runner Calderon.

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